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RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 1572
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
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RHMCSUU/FBI WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 JAKARTA 001859

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DEPT FOR DS/ICI/RFJ, DS/IP/EAP, DS/DSS/ITA, DS/CC,
DS/IIP/SC, EAP/MTS, INL FOR BOULDIN
DOJ FOR AAG SWARTZ, OPDAT FOR LEHMANN/ALEXANDRE
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SUBJECT: NEW HIGH SECURITY PRISON HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR
REFORMS

REF: A. JAKARTA 1718

[1](#)B. 06 JAKARTA 12773

Classified By: Political Counselor Joseph L. Novak for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary. A brand new "super-maximum security" prison on Nusa Kambangan Island in Central Java highlights the deficiencies of Indonesia's prison system. The new prison exhibits security and prisoner management systems that are sorely lacking in most Indonesian prisons where overcrowding, weak security controls and easy access to the outside world are the norm. Post is surveying activities of other donors and exploring ways in which to engage the GOI more concretely on the prison reform issue. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) In June the first group of prisoners was transferred to Indonesia's newest prison, known as LAPAS Pasir Putih (White Sands Prison). Described by officials as "super-maximum security", White Sands is one of five correctional facilities located on Nusa Kambangan Island, just off the southern coast of Central Java. The new prison is intended to hold drug traffickers and violent criminals, including terrorists, who are serving lengthy prison terms. One Amcit, who is serving a life sentence for narcotics charges, was among those transferred to White Sands from Cipinang prison in Jakarta.

The Exception That Proves the Rule

[1](#)3. (SBU) Poloff recently accompanied Conoff to both Cipinang and White Sands. Direct observation and interviews with prison officials and inmates confirm that White Sands is what Cipinang is not, and is the exception that proves the rule, demonstrating the advanced security controls and prisoner management systems that most Indonesian prisons sorely lack. Common weaknesses include:

- Inmate population not matched to prison capacity. Many if not most prisons in Indonesia are overcrowded. Officials in Cipinang prison in Jakarta freely admit that the prison is carrying 170% of capacity, and reports indicate that this is the norm in many facilities. White Sands is still receiving prisoners but is well below its stated capacity of 3000 inmates.

- Inoperable security equipment. In Cipinang, the metal detectors and x-ray machine used to screen visitors and their belongings were not being used. In White Sands, in contrast, all security equipment was turned on and in use.

- Access to prohibited goods. Inmate interviews and news reports confirm that banned items such as cell phones, laptops and other equipment are routinely possessed by inmates with complicity of prison guards. In June, a former Bali prison guard was sentenced to five years for passing a laptop computer to a convicted terrorist currently on death row (Ref A). In White Sands, the Director spoke frankly about the need to prevent prisoners from possessing these items, and conversations with inmates indicated that the rules were being strictly enforced.

- Unlimited access to the outside. In Cipinang and other Indonesian prisons, inmates carry cell phones and have regular face-to-face meetings with visitors during which various items can be passed. In Cipinang, we were easily able to get past the security frisk with a cell phone. In White Sands, however, there is no cellular service available, making electronic communication impossible. In addition, visitors do not have physical access to inmates; instead, they must see and speak to each other through a plastic barrier.

- A cash economy. In most prisons, inmates are able to use cash brought by family members to buy various goods, including prohibited items. In White Sands, cash cannot be passed directly to inmates because of the lack of direct contact. Instead, relatives must open accounts for inmates

JAKARTA 00001859 002 OF 003

at the prison cooperative, which the inmate can then use to make purchases.

Revolving Prison Doors

14. (C) Indonesia maintains a remarkable track record of arrests and trials of terror suspects. However, Indonesia's prisons remain a weak point, characterized by loosely implemented security controls and prisoner management systems which hinder the GOI's efforts to curb terrorism. Most prisoners here have easy access to goods and technology, thereby communicating freely with contacts both inside and outside the prison. In light of the relatively short sentences some terrorists have received, prison terms here barely slow the activities of committed terrorists, who maintain open communication with other radicals and terrorist network members. The spreading of radical teachings, recruitment, and even operational planning have taken place in Indonesia's prisons and continued upon release.

Donors Explore Prison Assistance Options

15. (C) The new prison is clearly a positive step, but it remains to be seen whether the stricter security controls there will be maintained over time and whether these controls will be duplicated at other prisons. Foreign donors have begun to look into ways to help Indonesia to better manage its prisons. We discussed the issue this week with our counterparts at the Australian Embassy. They told us they would sponsor a trip in August to Australia for several senior GOI corrections and CT officials. The trip would include a visit to the Australian Corrections Academy in Sydney and several site visits to Australian prisons. They said that the GOI had been reluctant to allow donors direct access to Indonesian prisons and was sensitive to programs which singled out terrorist prisoners when discussing assistance targets. The Australians said they hoped the experience in August would forge ties between Australian and Indonesian corrections officials and create other practical

training opportunities. For instance, the Australians would like eventually to assist the GOI in developing appropriate prison management training at the academy for the GOI's Ministry of Law and Human Rights, which manages the country's corrections system.

¶16. (C) An Australian Federal Police (AFP) official also highlighted Australia's role in the Multinational Operational Support Team (MNST) at the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC) in Semarang, Central Java. He told us that MNST's four member countries (Australia, Thailand, Singapore, and Indonesia) would sponsor a 16-22 July meeting at JCLEC between GOI prison officials and Singapore security (ISD) and prison officials which would focus on intelligence collection in prisons. The idea for the meeting had originated, he said, during a visit by MNST members to Singapore in May.

¶17. (C) The Australians noted that the Asia Foundation had expressed interest in conducting a prison management needs assessment. They said the proposal appeared comprehensive and focused broadly on the corrections system, not simply on incarceration of the terrorists. The proposal included assessments of the GOI system for handling prison budgeting, human rights issues and rehabilitative services, and pilot projects. Partly due to the difficulty in approaching the GOI on the prison issue and partly due to Australian sensitivities to reforming a prison system which housed so many Australian citizens (mainly under Indonesia's stiff narcotics laws), the Australian Embassy's Political Counselor indicated Canberra would readily fund the Asia Foundation proposal if it passed muster.

¶18. (C) Without endorsing the Asia Foundation project, we are exploring ways in which to engage the GOI more concretely on prison reform. We plan to continue coordinating closely with the Australians, who are likewise interested in continuing our dialogue on this issue. In addition, we will meet with

JAKARTA 00001859 003 OF 003

our French and Spanish counterparts here in Jakarta, both of whom indicated in recent weeks that they might be planning similar prison management trips to their respective countries.

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